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To: dlginational@gmail.com; Gray, Sue; Falcone, Iya; Francisco, Dale; Schneider, Helene; Mannix, Frank

Subject: Input for the November 13th Subcommittee Meeting on Homelessness

Hello Council Members,

Here is some community input for the "Draft Recommendations" and I fully expect that this will be treated as public comment and part of the public record for the upcoming meeting since I cannot be there in person.

First and foremost, my message is consistent - **there should be no gray area of interpretation or double standards when it comes to the fact that the public health, safety, and laws must be consistently enforced for homeless people the same as it should for everyone in the community.**

From the "Draft Recommendations" here are select points that I would like to reinforce:

- 1) A consistent, proactive police presence to safeguard the residents and people in the areas affected by homelessness (in particular Lower AND UPPER Milpas, and lower State Street) from drug dealing, illegal panhandling, loitering and illegal sales of alcoholic beverages to intoxicated individuals. This needs to include feet on the street and bicycle patrols at various hours not just a regular, easy to evade schedule.
- 2) Consider a revised City ordinance dealing with panhandling, including proximity to dining establishments, ATM machines, bus stops and public benches. Yes and put this into practice so that it makes a visible and measurable impact.
- 3) Develop a campaign to educate the public on the detrimental effects of giving to panhandlers. Well meaning people are perpetuating the problem when they give money to panhandlers. Definitely set up "giving stations" as an alternative and let people know the money will go to much better use.
- 4) Regarding Casa Esperanza... 50 – 100 extra beds would have a significant impact on the neighborhood. Look back at a similar set of meetings on homelessness from 2004 and you'll see the debate was going from 30 beds then to the now 100 beds year round. Don't let this number keep creeping up, the impact of illegal, health, and safety violations noticeably and directly increases with the increased number of homeless people at Casa Esperanza. Just look at the increase in police activity for the area in that time frame to validate this fact. It should be considered that the number of year round beds go back down especially if there are currently not enough police to protect the laws, public health, and safety in the area!
- 5) Need to look at a relocation fund for those willing and able to relocate. We should be

asking a difficult and important question- Does Santa Barbara really have the capacity to support people who became homeless in another community and then come to Santa Barbara especially if they are not ready or willing to turn their lives around? I think the answer is no and evidence that shelters are turning people away supports this. We should be working to get homeless people back to where their community, family, friends, or other support systems are.

And here are a couple of more to be added:

6) Benchmarks- What are the national averages (across the country not just selected west coast cities) for per capita homelessness? How much is spent per capita on homeless services? What is the average time that a homeless person stays with service providers? Then insure that Santa Barbara is at or below average on these benchmarks. Santa Barbara can be a leader in many things but my input is that homelessness is not one of them. The continuing concern with crime and gang violence goes hand in hand with the problems of homelessness. For one, dealing with homelessness takes resources from addressing crime and gang violence. And for another, when people in the community see that the laws, public health and safety are being violated by homeless people they take notice and it leads to a tipping point where crime continues to escalate.

7) Work Programs- This can be viewed as a benefit or punishment. For those wanting to improve their lives offer the opportunity to get paid for community service (e.g. cleaning public areas, removing graffiti, supporting other homeless people, cooking for shelters, etc.). For those who have "nothing to lose" and don't want to change their lives they must work off their debt with the same community service.

How do we pay for this:

1) Set aside 10% of the \$30+ million the city is spending for homeless programs to insure that the public health, safety, and laws are enforced. To do anything less would be irresponsible.

2) Look where dollars can be better utilized- For example, take the funds spent for putting art on State Street into bike and foot patrols on State Street. Think of it terms of "we can't decorate until we get the foundation in order". Another example, instead of paying to install and maintain benches that are monopolized by homeless people, remove them and use the money saved for homeless enforcement issues on State Street. I'm sure there are other examples that can be found in the city budget.

3) Take the money from the "giving stations" and funnel it to homeless intervention and prevention.

Thank you for your time